



CEDAR GROVE VETERINARY SERVICE NEWSLETTER



JANUARY 2018

TIPS TO HANDLE THE STRESS OF A DAIRY FARM: REMEMBER YOU ARE NOT ALONE

2017 was a hard year to be a farmer and unfortunately, 2018 doesn't look to offer farmers any relief. Milk production in the US has decreased slightly, but global supplies will still limit the ability of the milk price to bounce back. It is at these times that we need to remember to look out for ourselves or for the farmers in our lives.

If you are feeling more stressed lately, you are not alone. Recent reports indicate that many farmers are worn down both financially and emotionally after a few years of low prices and changing industry regulations. It can be even more stressful as a farmer to feel that you have done your best to cut costs and still may be burning through your savings.

The common stresses that are affecting farmers are:

- Financial pressures
- Debt
- Unpredictable weather and markets
- Extreme outdoor work conditions

- Fatigue
- Lack of personal time
- Little time to talk through problems
- Inter-generational differences
- Excessive workloads
- Health, pain, or mobility issues

But stress is a good thing, right? A little stress can be a motivator. However, too much stress can cause damage to your health. Constant high stress levels can lead to a rise in blood pressure, increased heart rate, increased blood clot formation, and changes to digestive function. Stress can also distract us from paying attention when working around large equipment which can be a safety hazard. Finally, stress can take a toll on personal relationships.

So, what can a farmer do to try to keep stress at a minimum?

Eat Right: You are what you eat. Too often farm life is so busy that most people end up eating what is easy, available, or fast. However, there is value to taking the time to have a

TEST YOUR DAIRY FARMING KNOWLEDGE

1) According to the USDA, what is the biggest expense on a dairy farm?

- a) Veterinary Medicine
- b) Repairs
- c) Feed Costs
- d) Labor

2) Recently, a Holstein cow set a new national production record with 78,170 lbs. of milk produced in one lactation. What state is she from?

- a) New York
- b) California
- c) Wisconsin
- d) Florida

3) How many pounds of milk is required to make a pound of cheese?

- a) 21.8 lbs.
- b) 12 lbs.
- c) 2.5 lbs.
- d) 9.8 lbs.

Answers on back

nutritious breakfast (or even simply just eating breakfast) and packing a lunch with fruits and vegetables. Try to limit the amount of fatty foods, sugar, and caffeine consumed each day.

Get Moving: Exercise is a natural and healthy stress reliever. Exercise stimulates the parts of our brain that keep the stress response in check. Simply taking 20 minutes out of your day to walk with your kids or spouse will have a positive effect on your stress.

Keep Your Sense of Humor:
Laughter has been shown to

alleviate the cycle of stress and clarify your perspective on life. So, it is good to remember to laugh and talk to others at a local shop, an auction, or at church.

Avoid Unhealthy De-Stressor

Methods: Drug and alcohol abuse will only make stress worse and should not be used as a coping mechanism.

Talk: Strong relationships and family bonds allow support and understanding during the hard times. Like with laughing, talking with others can offer perspective and prevent people from feeling like they are on an island. Talking to anyone can help: a friend, neighbor, fellow church member, anyone who will listen.

Clarify Long-term Goals:

While it may seem counter-intuitive to think about the future when you are stressed, re-evaluating the goals of the farm is a good thing to do to keep track of the direction of the farm and what you want

to accomplish. It also may put the current stresses into perspective.

Plan for Family Time and

Check-Ins: While it is hard to shut down a farm completely for every family event, it is important to make time for the important events and communicate when unexpected changes happen on the farm that may affect the way you spend time with your family. Also make time to check-in with the important people in your life to make sure they are not overly stressed and to communicate concerns about deadlines, schedules and your priorities.

Stress is one of those things that we all live with, but high levels of stress can have serious consequences for ourselves and those around us. Remember to try to keep stress at a minimum by using the strategies listed above and don't be afraid to ask for help if you need. No farmer should ever feel they are alone.

WORLD of COW
By Stik



**Dairy Farm Knowledge
Answers**

1: C 2: C 3: D



Opportunities for Barn Cat Spays/Neuters at Cedar Grove Veterinary Services

Due to a recent anonymous donation, we are offering free spays and neuters to barn cats on our clients' farms. This program will only be available until the money in the fund runs out. So, it would be best to think about this early. Additionally, with new kittens bound to arrive on many farms in the spring, it may also be best to think about spaying or neutering some of your barn cats in January or February. If you are interested in the program, please contact the clinic for more details.